The ‘ESP’ demonstration

http://www.bbc.co.uk/videohub/esptest.shtml

The setup is that this is a video that uses psychic powers to influence someone’s Zener card guesses. A participant is sat six feet from the screen. There are three ‘tests’. In each, the video clip is paused whilst a participant is asked to select one of the Zener symbols and say it aloud. Amazingly, when the ‘play’ button is pressed, each of her guesses turns out to be correct – a clear demonstration of ESP.

What the participant (or the audience) doesn’t know is that the demonstrator is manipulating the video so that it corresponds with what the participant has guessed. This is done by clicking on different regions of the ‘play’ button (top left for circle; top right for cross, bottom left for wavy lines, bottom right for square and centre for star). The demonstrator must operate the computer for the trick to work, which is why the participant must be sat away from the screen (and call out her guesses).